

BLOOMFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

LAND USE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE

There was a regular meeting of the above referenced subcommittee held on Tuesday, October 18, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, Bloomfield Town Hall, 800 Bloomfield Avenue, Bloomfield, CT.

Committee members present were: Deputy Mayor Schulman, Councilors Rivers, Hypolite, Washington, Neuwirth and DeLorenzo

Also present were: Philip K. Schenck, Jr., Town Manager, James Wren, Director of Finance, India Rodgers, Clerk of Council and Jose Giner, Director of Planning & Economic Development

Guest were: Michelle Bononi (EDC member) and Bonnie Bercowetz (EDC member), David Driver – Goman & York

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.

Presentation by Goman & York – TIF Implementation Policy

Goman & York did not present on the proposed TIF Implementation Policy. Their next report will be on the agenda for November 2016 meeting.

Review and Discussion regarding the Draft Tax Abatement Policy

Mr. Jose Giner, Director of Planning and Economic Development met with David Driver and Don Poland from Goman & York to discuss the development of a tax abatement policy for the Town of Bloomfield. The draft policy has been modeled after the Town of Windsor. The committee discussed key items regarding the tax abatement schedule and adjustments.

Deputy Mayor Schulman and Councilor Hypolite complimented Mr. Giner on the first draft of the Tax Abatement Policy. They also recommended filing these abatements on land records.

The committee agreed on having input with the Town Council. The inclusion of the public hearing was also a great aspect of this policy. It was suggested that tax abatements should be evaluated in comparison of what other communities have done. In general, 80% for 6yrs has been the base model in past evaluations of other communities. Mr. Giner recommended an overall maximum commitment of 4 years for an abatement.

The committee also discussed an employment component to be included in an agreement. Specific language would include laborer vs. contractors/subcontractors and 20% of minority participation.

Deputy Mayor Schulman recommended that the Economic Development Commission (EDC) should be involved from the initial negotiations when attracting new businesses to town.

In the draft document, it was recommended under Item C to add language to refer to the Land Use & Economic Development subcommittee for review and discussion. In addition, including the environment impact and traffic study information for abatement that warrant these studies.

Deputy Mayor Schulman recommended a joint meeting with the Finance Subcommittee and the Economic Development Commission (EDC) to further discuss and finalize this document.

Mr. Philip K. Schenck, Jr, Town Manager stated that the committee may want to include language to reflect Council discretion to suggest these studies as a part of the approval process.

Councilor Washington inquired about including the 20% minority participation and application fees for tax incentives.

Councilor DeLorenzo inquired about categories with the draft document for employment/local contractors, green technology/LEED certified, mill rate, traffic and environment studies need to be referenced, identify definition of Class of A – office space.

The committee also discussed changes within the document for new and existing businesses and how many would be over \$80M, the application fee, refer to subcommittees public hearing, omnibus clause for Council to waive sections of policy.

Councilor Merritt agreed to use tax incentives more for the needs of town. He also liked having an application fee. This policy should be more vague and list items on what the town may in total written policy.

Councilor Neuwirth expressed the need to address public concern and perception based on the past experience with Niagara Bottling.

Councilor Rivers stated that there has been no consistency in the past and this document is needed as a base moving forward.

Councilor Hypolite stated that this policy would be a fundamental shift on doing business. This policy must include language with “may” and “sole discretion”, employment – contractors/subcontractors vs. laborers (minority set aside).

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mrs. Michele Bononi, 85 Vista Way of the Economic Development Commission (EDC) expressed concerns about:

- Town needs and benefits
- Understanding competitors
- How much land is available?
- Targets for the town and what does the town want
- Where is the money coming from to give benefit?
- Comments in protecting town’s interest

Mrs. Bonnie Bercowetz, 488 Park Avenue, EDC member commended Council for responding to negative backlash from Niagara in a positive light in creating this document for future negotiations with potential businesses.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business for discussion.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Councilor DeLorenzo, seconded by Councilor Neuwirth and voted unanimously to approve the minutes of September 20, 2016.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Councilor DeLorenzo, seconded by Councilor Neuwirth and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m.